



The Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report of the  
Office of Oral Health  
Family Health Administration  
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



**HISTORY** In 1996, Senate Bill 590 established the Office of Oral Health within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Based on this legislation, the Office of Oral Health is charged with developing statewide oral health preventive and educational strategies, conducting oral health surveys of the State's schoolchildren, facilitating the Oral Health Advisory Committee, and providing grant monies for the establishment of oral health programs targeted to populations at high risk for oral disease.



Caring

**MISSION** The mission of the Office of Oral Health (OOH) is to improve the oral health status of Maryland residents through a variety of public oral health initiatives and interventions, characterized by a focus on health promotion and disease prevention. OOH develops, promotes, and advocates statewide cost-effective preventive and educational activities and policies that demonstrate and define the role of oral health as part of overall systemic health and quality of life. The OOH partners with other State agencies, local health departments, schools, community agencies, and private providers in developing policies, programs, and activities which address the following five major areas:

- ◆ *Oral Disease Prevention:* Develop and support scientifically proven oral health interventions and policies which prevent oral diseases, including promotion of community water fluoridation, use of dental sealants, systemic and topical fluoride use, tobacco use prevention, health education, instruction in oral hygiene, and proper dietary choices.
- ◆ *Current & Unmet Oral Disease Status:* Improve the current status of unmet and untreated oral diseases in Maryland populations including early childhood caries, adult and child dental caries, and periodontal diseases.
- ◆ *Oral Injuries:* Reduce the number of oral injuries and sports related oral injuries that occur in Maryland schoolchildren each year.
- ◆ *Oral Cancer:* Reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with oral cancer in Maryland residents.
- ◆ *Special Population Groups:* Improve access to oral health care treatment, preventive and educational services and resources for underserved and uninsured Maryland populations.



## MARYLAND DENT-CARE LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM

### *Background*

In 2000, the Maryland General Assembly created a new loan repayment program for dentists entitled the Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MDC-LARP). The purpose of the MDC-LARP is to increase the number of dentists providing oral health services to Maryland Medical Assistance Program (MMAP) recipients. Each year, five Maryland dentists are selected to participate in the program for a period of three years. The dentists selected to the program receive \$99,000 in educational loan repayment over the three-year period. In return for the loan repayment, dentists commit to provide at least 30 percent of their total patient services to the MMAP recipient population per year. In 2002 a total of 15 dentists were participating in the program.

OOH in partnership with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) administers this program. OOH monitors participants on a monthly basis to ensure compliance with program goals, collects all applications, convenes the review panel, promotes the program, gathers feedback from award recipients, conducts initial and yearly site visits, and provides an orientation for new program participants.

### Accomplishments

- ◆ January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002: approximately 11,405 oral health services were provided to MMAP recipients.
- ◆ Coordinated free daylong continuing education program for MDC-LARP recipients.
- ◆ Promoted the MDC-LARP program both within Maryland as well as in the surrounding states. Published in the following organizations newsletters: Maryland State Dental Association, Maryland Academy of General Dentistry, and the Maryland Society for Pediatric Dentistry. Held a question and answer session for University of Maryland Dental School students.

## **DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS (DENTAL HPSAS)**

Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are federally designated areas that have shortages of dentists and may be urban or rural areas, population groups or medical or other public facilities. The primary intent of the Dental HPSA designation is to encourage the placement of dentists in areas that lack sufficient dental personnel. A Dental HPSA can be a distinct geographic area (such as a county), a specific population group within the area (such as the low-income), or a specific public or nonprofit facility (such as a prison).

The Office of Oral Health partners with the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health in designating regions of the state that have a shortage of dental providers as Dental HPSAs. In FY03, OOH focused on the Eastern Shore and designated all of Dorchester County and specific census tracks in Queen Anne's County as Dental HPSAs.





## **MARYLAND ORAL CANCER PREVENTION AND EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

This multi-faceted program establishes the following: a) training programs for health care providers to screen and refer patients with oral cancers; b) public education programs about oral cancer prevention and the need to receive an oral cancer examination; and c) promotion of smoking cessation programs. In the fall of 2001, 21 counties were awarded 2-year non-competitive grants to reduce oral cancer mortality.

### Oral Cancer Burden in Maryland

- ◆ Maryland ranks eighth in the nation for deaths from oral cancer.
- ◆ African American males in Maryland have the sixth highest death rate in the nation from oral cancer.
- ◆ 2002 Survey of Maryland Adult's Knowledge of Oral Cancer included:
  - 1,127 randomly selected Maryland adults who were surveyed by telephone about their knowledge of oral cancer. The interviews and analysis were conducted by the University of Baltimore.
  - 42% reported ever having had an oral cancer exam;
  - 73% had never heard of a test or exam for oral cancer;
  - 77% who had ever had an oral cancer exam, had their oral cancer exam performed by a dentist.

### Reduce Oral Cancer Mortality Grants:

- ◆ Through local health departments, approximately 2,800 adults were screened for oral cancer, 37 brush biopsies were performed, 9 individuals were referred to an oral surgeon for suspicious lesions, and there were zero cases of oral cancer.
- ◆ Local health departments sponsored 14 healthcare provider education trainings and over 850 healthcare providers attended these trainings.
- ◆ Local health departments provided 67 public education sessions and displayed 7 billboards across the state.

#### Statewide Public Relations Campaign

- ◆ Oral Cancer Awareness Week
  - June 22 – 28, 2003 marked the third *Maryland Oral Cancer Awareness Week* proclaimed by Governor Ehrlich.
  - OOH sponsored public service announcements on the following radio stations throughout the state: Live 105.7 (Baltimore), WKGO-FM (Hagerstown), WFRB-FM (Hagerstown), WARK/WARX (Hagerstown), WCEI (Easton), WFRB (Cumberland), WITO (Cumberland).
- ◆ Maryland Oral Cancer Website – [www.maryland-oralcancer.org](http://www.maryland-oralcancer.org)
  - A section was added to the oral cancer website for healthcare providers. This section provides information about how to perform a comprehensive oral cancer examination as well as provides links to on-line education resources and smoking cessation programs.

#### Committee Chair – Oral and Oro-Pharyngeal Cancer Committee

- ◆ OOH served as the Oral and Oro-Pharyngeal Cancer Committee chairperson for the development of the Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan. The committee developed a plan for reducing oral and oro-pharyngeal cancer morbidity and mortality in Maryland.

#### Materials and Outreach

- ◆ *Let Them Know They've Had One* postcards – This postcard was developed for dentists and dental hygienists. It advises dental providers to let their patients know when they've had an oral cancer exam and directs them to the healthcare provider section of the Maryland Oral Cancer Website.
- ◆ Oral cancer awareness, education, and intervention were provided at the following outreach activities: Firemen's Convention (June), Black History Month Health Fair (February), Students Against Starting Smoking (SASS) Conference (April).

Healthy Smiles

## ORAL HEALTH AND CHILD HEALTH

### *Background*

Oral health is an integral component of overall health. The medical consequences of poor oral health include infection, pain, and impaired eating ability that lead to poor nutritional status. In addition to these physical affects, poor oral health can lead to speech difficulties, unpleasant appearance affecting self-esteem, and an inability to concentrate due to pain. For children this pain negatively impacts their readiness to learn and productivity in school. Since dental disease occurs frequently and treatment is more expensive than prevention, educating parents and children has a health and economic benefit.

### Child Oral Health Status in Maryland

- ◆ Survey of the Oral Health Status of Maryland School Children, 2000 – 2001 results:
  - The weighted sample of 3,492 public school children represents 228,742 children in Maryland and included grades Kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.
    - 42% of all children (K, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> grade) had untreated decay;
    - 53% of children in Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade had untreated decay in their primary teeth;
    - The Eastern Shore had the highest percentage of untreated dental decay (54%) followed by the Central Baltimore region (48%).

### Head Start and Oral Health

- ◆ A series of four lesson plans for Head Start instructors were developed in FY 02. In FY 03, these lesson plans were pilot tested in Carroll County and Baltimore City Head Start centers. The feedback about the lesson plans was positive and in FY 04 a revised version of the lesson plans will be available.

Educational Materials: As a method of increasing the oral health knowledge of Maryland residents, the OOH developed the following new print material for distribution to local health departments, clinics, schools, and private citizens.

- ◆ *Dental First Aid for Children 2003* -- This flip chart was developed to aid school nurses, school health aides, teachers, school administrators, Head Start coordinators, day care providers, and other health and administrative personnel and parents in the effective management of dental emergencies.

## ORAL HEALTH GRANTS

In FY 2003, oral health grants were awarded to fifteen (15) local health departments to develop community based and school based preventive, treatment, and educational and outreach programs for oral health.

### Clinical Services

- ◆ **Clinic Visits:** 2,333 children and 164 adults received dental visits in FY 2003.  
Local health departments that provide comprehensive dental care are often one of the few providers of Medicaid dental services in their county and typically treat children. Two counties have instituted adult dental programs by working with private dentists in their counties to establish reduced fees.
- ◆ **Sealants:** Approximately 3,500 children received pit-and-fissure sealants through school based sealant programs organized and implemented by local health departments. The majority of school sealant programs target second graders since the first permanent molars appear around the age of six. Sixty-nine schools and one community program participated in local health department sealant programs.
- ◆ **Fluoride Rinse/Tablets:** 3,900 children received fluoride rinse or tablets in FY 2003. Local health departments partnered with 39 schools and community programs to provide this service to school aged children.

#### Community Education

More than 9,500 children received oral health education through local health departments in FY 2003. In addition, local health department dental staff educated WIC clients and staff, Head Start children, migrant communities and interacted with other local parent organizations to promote good oral health.

#### Case Management

In an effort to increase access to oral health services for Medicaid children, OOH provides funds for case management services. In FY 2003 approximately 900 children were case managed into dental care through the local health department programs.





## PARTNERSHIPS

The Office of Oral Health partners with a variety of State and local agencies and local coalitions (in addition to those previously listed) to improve oral health.

- ◆ Eastern Shore Oral Cancer Coalition – This group is comprised of local health department programs and the Eastern Shore Oral Health Outreach Program and the Lower Eastern Shore Dental Education Program. The Coalition works to share resources and collaborate effective measures to increase oral cancer awareness on the Eastern Shore.
- ◆ Maryland Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped -- OOH provides funding to this group to coordinate the provision of free dental care to disabled and elderly Maryland residents who cannot afford needed dental treatment are not eligible for public assistance
- ◆ Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A Coalition – OOH continues to serve as a founding member of the Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition along with the University of Maryland, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, Maryland State Dental Association, Maryland Dental Society, Maryland Dental Hygienist's Association, Children's National Medical Center, District of Columbia Dental Program, District of Columbia Dental Association and Delaware State Dental Program.
- ◆ University of Maryland, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery – OOH provides funding to the University of Maryland, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery to continue the Eastern Shore Oral Health Outreach Program and the Lower Eastern Shore Dental Education Program. These programs provide case management services, education, screening/sealants, and fluoride rinse for children on the Eastern Shore.

## OFFICE OF ORAL HEALTH

Family Health Administration

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